

*specificata* and *decernimus*, for the sentence must have run: *specificata dicti abbas et conventus supportabunt. Quod si contingat* (&c., as on page 70, line 15) *decernimus* &c.; p. 63, l. 15, *huic* should be *hinc*, and p. 66, l. 7, *hic* should be *hinc*, and a few lines later read 1331 for 1230; p. 71, l. 16, *quondam* should be *quandam*; p. 72, l. 31, *ad* is required before *ecclesiam* (cf. p. 67, l. 15); p. 74, l. 2, *qui* should be *que*, and l. 33, *ab* is required before *antiquo*; p. 75, l. 4, *quadragesimam* should be *quadragesimalis*; p. 79, l. 38, *materia* as written by the scribe is correct; p. 80, l. 18, *fuerunt* should be *fuerint*, and likewise p. 85, l. 11; p. 82, l. 6, read *eodem* for *eodem*, and l. 24, *peticione* for *petitionem*; p. 85, l. 26, *continucionem* should be *continuacionem*, and the sentence should run: *quantum ad omnia alia per privilegia sedis apostolice, continuacionem usus privilegiorum suorum, et ezeucionem iuris sui*; line 34, insert *sibi* before *et*, and line 42, read *area* for *arca*; p. 89, l. 3, insert *hiis* before *ezequendis*, and line 20, insert *cum* before *ecclesia*; p. 91, at the bottom of the page, read *lite contestata* for *litem contestatam*; p. 92, l. 15, and p. 93, l. 22, *hic* should be *hinc*. The introduction, though short, is full of interest.

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*Visitations of Religious Houses.* Vol. i, 1420 to 1436. (The Lincoln Record Society, Vol. VII.) Edited by A. HAMILTON THOMPSON. (Horncastle: Morton, 1914.)

THIS is a piece of work in which the editor has been helped by Mr. G. G. Coulton, and it has been executed with admirable learning and completeness. The Latin, accurately transcribed, is faced by an English translation that shows full knowledge; the introduction, notes, appendixes, and glossary are most instructive. Occasions for criticism are few; yet in a curious passage on p. 53 *pertractatio* means 'contemplation', not 'performance'; on p. 101 *antiqua nemora non cedua* does not mean 'old copses, not in decay', but contrasts standard timber with woods cut in rotation; and on p. 115 *salutem in amplexibus Salvatoris*, very characteristic of devout feminine musing of the fifteenth century, has been omitted from the translation of a licence given by a prioress to one of her nuns.

The documents cover every aspect of monastic life as it came before a bishop and his officials and was recorded in his registers. The most important part is the series of injunctions issued after visitation by Bishops Fleming and Gray, and to them this notice must be limited. Yet the volume deals with many other topics of interest, and among them a visitation of Lincoln Cathedral in 1432, which was one stage in the famous struggle of Dean Mackworth against his successive diocesans. In regard to the injunctions, since all that we know of the evidence upon which they are based is that it satisfied the bishops, a certain effort of reading between the lines is necessary for their interpretation. But this volume is soon to be followed by one of the proceedings of Bishop Alnwick, the record of whose actual interrogations and discoveries has been preserved, and the editor is sometimes able to cast light upon obscurities from these subsequent revelations.

No question about monastic injunctions is more interesting than that of the meaning, or want of meaning, in the element of common form that they contain. In regard to this the editor makes the point that the more serious the evils to be amended, the more grave is the preamble. But it is followed by the usual admonitions as to punctuality and regularity at early services, and so forth; only after this are the more conspicuous offences recited. Thus, when the visitor is most in earnest, he still lays stress on these apparently trivial matters. The laxity in such cases evidently infects the whole life of the house; and the impression which these visitations leave is that the cause of mischief was weakness of government. Whether the symptoms of revolt be serious or slight, they are due to the relaxation of authority; there is no sign of their being caused by its excessive employment. If the common form is not meaningless in the more serious cases, neither is it otiose in the lighter. This seems clear from the numerous instances in which a general injunction is amplified in a way which shows that the visitor was writing with local knowledge. For instance, while no order is more common than that for attendance at matins, at Ashby only is it ordered that canons shall appear fully dressed at that service. The bishop must have received information that one or more of these religious were anticipating the defective dress of modern undergraduates at chapel or roll-call. Another general injunction is that of bed and silence as soon as the duties of the day are over; at Newnham, near Bedford, there is an order against sitting and joking in the kitchen. At Caldwell, Huntingdon, and St. Frideswide's, hounds are no longer to be kept within the monastery. Their presence in it was a fact which could not be concealed, but the special injunctions at Dunstable, that canons are not to go to the meet nor accompany the hounds or hawks if they fall in with them abroad, remind us that the second contingency has befallen the country clergy in recent times, and the offence can only have reached the bishop's ears through information given him within or without the monastery. We cannot wonder that in more than one case there is an injunction against ill will or revenge for what has been revealed.

But we need not suppose that an injunction meant that the fault against which it was aimed was prevalent. After making all allowance for the effect of the solemn command to each inmate to reveal whatever abuses he knew, and also for a standard of honour that differed from ours and that must have been affected by the atmosphere of the cloister, we may still assume that monks, treated like schoolboys throughout their life, had in general the schoolboy's loyalty to his class and did not tell tales of one another except under pressure. The visitor, therefore, except when he was fortified by external information on which he could base his examination, had to construct his report out of what he could pick up at his interviews, which might neither be serious in itself nor characteristic of the house he was visiting. If, for instance, we find that St. Frideswide's is the only convent where abstinence from archery is enjoined, we must not conclude that this recreation was prevalent at Oxford, nor that it was unknown elsewhere.

Visitations, the editor points out, were not held systematically; and

of course exempt houses and orders were excluded. Only 32 out of 136 monasteries in the diocese of Lincoln were visited (or at least received injunctions) under Fleming and Gray; but Mr. Hamilton tells of visitations by Archbishops Courtenay, Arundel, and Chichele, which were summary but fairly complete. They were no doubt chiefly aimed at the Lollards, but in their course the whole function of the bishop, who was inhibited, was taken over by the archbishop, and fees were exacted by the Canterbury officials. On procedure at visitation these documents, save some commissions and some returns made by the commissioner to the bishop, cast little light. From the injunctions, after such deduction for common form and for possible reticence in grave cases as may be necessary, we learn what the bishop or his representatives regarded as proved to need amendment. We do not learn how they collected or how they tested the evidence submitted to them. The one instructive case as to method is that of the prioress of Markyate, who must be mentioned below.

It must be said that we do not get a pleasant impression from this volume. There is a general laxity and a want of enthusiasm so prevalent that the visitors themselves can venture upon nothing higher than an attempt to maintain decorum. There are, it is true, cases of the gravest misconduct, but they are not very numerous and are so frankly described that it is unlikely that false shame has concealed others of the same kind. Why, indeed, should not realities be stated in such a record as an episcopal register? In fact, considering the general spirit of the monasteries, as revealed by the injunctions that were necessary, the wonder is that the worst offences were so few. For monasticism had drifted into a false position. The monastery did not offer the privilege of retreat to minds which had the vocation: it had become a competitor for recruits. There was a certain number of places that must be filled, and neither the convents nor the visitors could afford to be scrupulous as to the quality of the persons they accepted. We have already reached the point at which the founders of colleges saw their opportunity and reaped their harvest. Newstead Priory near Stamford (not the better-known house in Nottinghamshire) is derelict; the prior resigns in 1435, and he is the last inmate. It is true that this Austin Priory revived, and did not share the fate of Selborne, one of Bishop Waynflete's acquisitions; but this volume prepares us for the fate of Brackley Hospital, which was to fall into his hands. But, apart from such extreme cases, the evidence is ample for a decline in numbers which made it impossible for some monasteries to carry out the routine of their services; this (though the editor does not mention the point) may account for the large number of secular clergy, not always endowed, who were employed by monasteries. Several times injunctions are issued which peremptorily order an increase of numbers. In no case is a word spoken concerning a scrutiny of motives, and two of the houses to which the command is given were in such a state of moral dissolution that one would have expected a bishop to forbid the enlistment of recruits till the life had been amended. The only case in which an increase is forbidden is Fineshade, a poor priory, 'ne propter penuriam detur licentia evagandi'; the laxity of the Austin rule would

make it difficult to hinder this. The need of numbers led to urgent commands to recover 'apostates', even though their desertion might be due to the want of vocation for the life, and also, again without consideration of motive, to the order that religious who had not made their profession should at once make it.

The inmates knew that they were indispensable, and therefore were tempted to take liberties. They were further provoked to take them by the fact that their life was governed by antique codes which provoked rebellion. The visitor himself had to use the standard of the Benedictine or Austin rule as that by which he judged the life. But it was increasingly difficult to enforce it. There was a prejudice against the common meal in the refectory, so strong that the bishops had to allow a compromise. At Eynsham it is enjoined that two-thirds of the inmates shall be present; at Godstow there must be twelve at least. At other houses not the number of persons but that of occasions is specified. The nuns of Delapr  have kept frater thrice in the week; henceforth it must be four times. At Bradwell it is ordered that frater be kept every Wednesday and Friday. At Humberstone Abbey there is an obscure injunction on which light is thrown by the editor from Alnwick's visitation. That bishop found that for twenty years the refectory had only been used on Good Friday. Dorter, too, was being neglected, and there are symptoms of the approach of that state which was prevalent at the Dissolution, when the dormitory, no doubt a draughty building, was often abandoned, and the religious slept by ones and twos in any available room. And there are signs of the development of a rotation by which a fixed number, which tended to be a maximum, attended each service. At Ramsey it is enjoined that at least sixteen, beside those officiating, shall be present; the editor estimates that the house contained forty monks. This is to be an improvement upon the existing practice, but even the latter far exceeds what Bishop Alnwick found being observed a few years later.

When the greater monasteries found it difficult to obtain novices, the smaller must have been in even greater straits. The career was ceasing to seem attractive to parents who had children to settle in life. One cause was poverty; there are a good many complaints that the *peculium*, or pocket-money, was irregularly paid to the monks. Even at a large house, like Bardney, where it was £1 per annum, this was the case. And the poverty was often due to maladministration. There is ample evidence of a want of interest in the affairs of the house on the part of the monks. It is constantly enjoined that an annual account shall be submitted to the full chapter, and abbots are forbidden to keep matters in their own hands. At Peterborough, where the visitor supersedes the abbot by a committee, though he does not depose him, one of the charges is that he bestows the livings in the gift of the house at his own discretion; and generally there is a failure of the inmates to exercise their constitutional rights over the management of the corporate property. In fact, the fortunes of a religious house had come to depend upon the character of its head, and a bad tradition was likely to perpetuate itself by the election of successive heads who would maintain the existing laxity. The worst of the greater houses in the diocese of Lincoln was Eynsham Abbey.

It was insolvent, its jewels were in pawn, there was no master of the novices, the Benedictine rule was flagrantly neglected. We may regard it as a symptom rather than the cause of this low state that the abbot was convicted of vulgar immorality. Happily, when we last hear of him, his deposition seems to be impending. Similarly at the small house of Canons Ashby the prior frequents inns, boards his own relations on the priory, wears lay attire, and is scandalous in his relations with women. He, however, is not deposed, but only suspended from the execution of his office.

It was, perhaps, to be expected that when self-respect was lost a house of nuns would fall lower than one of monks. There are two instances which show whole communities in this state. Godstow was a nunnery with special temptations; but it is astonishing that Bishop Gray, in appointing a commission to visit it, should instruct them to ascertain whether a nun, whom he names and whom at a previous visitation he had found on the point of becoming a mother, has been elected to any post of authority within it. Still more remarkable is the case of the prioress of Markyate. She was charged, and Bishop Gray's commissaries proclaimed her guilty of the offence, with gross and prolonged immoral relations with the steward of her convent. In the course of the hearing she offered to clear herself by compurgation, but could not find even five among her sisters to assert their belief in her good character. She was allowed to resign, but the editor adds that nine years later she was still prioress. If she had been re-elected by the convent, the nuns had made themselves her accomplices, and the bishop, by instituting her afresh, had condoned her fault. But perhaps her cession had never taken effect; if that were so, there was a weakness of administration on the bishop's part, not exceeded by that of the Elizabethan bishops in their dealing with the puritans; for the offence is recorded with all solemnity in the register, not as an accusation, but as a *compertum*. Professor R. G. Usher has taught us that the Elizabethan visitations merely revealed nonconformity, which the bishops had no power to combat, and he contrasts with their weakness the coercive jurisdiction of their predecessors. These visitations seem to show an equal ineffectiveness in the fifteenth century.

To explain the sad state of some houses, the editor suggests that they were disorganized by a recent change from the alien to the denizen status. He instances Daventry and St. Neots, the latter of which was almost dismantled. It had not even a bell to announce the hours, and there were no carrels in the cloister. The discipline corresponded to the equipment. However this may be, the measures ordered for reformation are very uniform. Punishment takes very few shapes. Only once is the discipline ordered, at St. Frideswide's; once an offender is to be isolated and take his meals alone, at Peterborough. Usually either imprisonment, fasting, or fining is the penalty. The *peculium* is very conspicuous. Among the few duties of personal relation of a head towards his subjects that are enjoined is that of annually receiving their confession and taking account of their *peculium*, which they are to display. If he deems it excessive, he may confiscate it for the good of the house. But a more

urgent danger is that of its being diminished by fines. At Newnham, near Bedford, canons in priests' orders are negligent in confession and saying mass; a deduction is to be made from their *peculium*. In the same priory there has been a brawl, with effusion of blood, between two canons; the smart fine of £5 is imposed, which is to be added—a characteristic touch—to the bishop's procurations. Of appeals to higher feelings than the dread of punishment, or to higher duties than that of keeping rules, there is a remarkable lack.

In regard to education we learn little. There are a number of orders that elementary education shall be provided for the boys who are being brought up as monks, and twice that necessary officer, the master of novices, is mentioned. In a society much smaller than a modern college, whose members lived in closer association than that of common room, the comfort of the seniors must have needed that a strong discipline should be maintained over the juniors. Of a library, of books (except once of service books in the church), of study, there is no mention whatever. External education only appears in the houses of men in the case of the almonry boys. In several houses orders are given that the school for them is to be established or increased in numbers. One object expressed is that the broken meats may have fit recipients. At Thornton there are to be at least twelve such boys. Usually they would take orders, with a small pension from the house that had trained them as their title, which would be forfeited as soon as they received a benefice. But at one humble monastery, Bradwell Priory, the motive for starting such a school is that it will furnish recruits to the house itself. But only the poorest monasteries would look to such a source; the rest would expect neighbours, and perhaps tenants, of the middle class to spare them their superfluous sons. Of more general education, such as in grammar schools, no mention is made in these injunctions. They furnish evidence, however, of female education as a normal employment of the nunneries. Such education must end at fourteen. Nunneries also, very properly, conducted infant schools for boys, but this seems only to be sanctioned in the case of the poorest. Burnham, one of the worst endowed houses in England, is forbidden to have males dwelling in the house beyond the age of eight. Boarders also were a source of income, which might be necessary, but required supervision. A married couple lodging at Godstow excite animadversion and must be expelled; at poor Burnham female lodgers may be received, after their names have been submitted to the bishop and approved by him.

Little can be learned from these documents concerning the rights of the patron of a monastery, which were more real and important than is commonly remembered. But a veiled though unsuccessful attack upon these rights is constantly being made in the injunctions. They forbid the burdening of religious houses with corrodies, which were (though the bishops are discreetly silent on the point) often granted at the command of the Crown or other patron. But the visitors never venture to annul corrodies already granted. At St. Frideswide's corrodies have been given in defiance of a recent injunction; at his visitation Bishop Fleming only commands that the offence shall not be repeated. And at Eynsham,

where the bishop, as successor of the great Remigius who had restored the Benedictine life in the monastery after the Conquest, was patron as well as visitor, corrodies already in existence are maintained as a legal charge upon an income that was sequestrated by Bishop Gray for the payment of debts.

The picture of these monasteries is not a bright one. There is no sign of any hope or desire on the bishops' part to maintain anything higher than respectability; and it was evidently difficult to reach even that standard. The age was in many ways degenerating, and this is the generation after Chaucer. But it was an age of liberality to such religious objects as it approved. While St. Neots Priory was in decay the noble parish church of that place, the 'cathedral of Huntingdonshire', was being built, of whose splendour the architecture is sufficient witness. The men who built the church stretched out no hand to help the monastery. The visitor contemplates no source of relief for it save from a better administration of its ancient endowments. Public opinion throughout England in regard to the religious houses would have agreed with Bishop Gray's verdict on Delapré Abbey. He drily remarks that he cannot find much to praise, but there are some things that must be amended.

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*Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, July 1583—July 1584, preserved in the Public Record Office.* Edited by SOPHIE CRAWFORD LOMAS, F.R.Hist.Soc. (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1914.)

THE *Calendar of Foreign State Papers* is making unusually rapid progress under the editorship of Mrs. Lomas, though it barely keeps pace with the lapse of time, and the thirteen months covered by this volume are at least equalled in number by those which have elapsed since the publication of its predecessor. The inclusion of the thirteenth month, July 1584, brings the assassination of William of Orange within its scope, though not the effect of that murder on English policy. Perhaps the most interesting comment on Gerard's deed is that (No. 768) where Herle attributes Gerard's success to the overweening confidence of Villiers, the Calvinist minister, in his own capacity as 'master of the spies'. 'For by Villiers' presumption, access was given to the murderer, who for thirteen weeks was in and out in the prince's court, seeking opportunity for his design, in which time there failed neither suspicion nor advertisement that he was not what he pretended.' Motley has made popular the view that William's assassination was a wellnigh fatal blow to the cause of the insurgents, and that but for it the Prince of Orange might have succeeded in uniting the seventeen provinces. Mrs. Lomas is constrained to point out (pp. xxxi-ii) that such a view is not supported by the documents she prints. At no period was Parma's progress more rapid than during the last twelve months of Orange's life. Town after town familiar to us to-day as household words, Ypres, Nieuport, Ostend, Dunkirk, was reduced by siege, assault, or composition, in spite of the inundations which in 1583-4 no less than in 1914-15 were found to be the most effective means of defence.